

11

means permitting a system customer to place an order for a particular video or still image content to be displayed on a particular electronic display of the network;

means for transmitting customer-ordered video or still image content to the customer-selected electronic display location; and

means for driving each electronic display to display customer-ordered video or still image content.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein the electronic displays are located in outdoor or indoor high traffic areas primarily for advertising purposes, the video or still image content comprises advertising content and the central information processing station includes means for receiving customer-transmitted video or still image advertising content.

3. The system of claim 1 wherein the electronic displays are electronic movie display devices located in movie theaters, the video or still image content comprises movies in digital form and the system customers comprise movie theater operators.

4. A system for distributing movies owned by content providers and for displaying the movies on a digital display device according to the dictates of digital display device operators who are the customers of the system, said system comprising:

a network connecting to a plurality of electronic movie display devices located in movie theaters;

at least one central information processing station including:

a customer interface permitting system customers to access the system;

means permitting a system customer to review movies that are available in digital form to the customer;

means permitting a system customer to schedule and purchase a movie for display on a particular electronic movie display device located at the customer's movie theater at a scheduled time; and

means for transmitting a customer-ordered movie in digital form to the customer's digital display device for display at said scheduled time.

5. The system of claim 4 wherein the electronic movie display devices are selected from the group consisting of LED displays, LCD shutter-type screens, digital light processing systems and reflective LCD displays.

6. The system of claim 4 including means for generating bills to customers.

7. The system of claim 4 including means for generating royalty payment information for use in paying the content providers for use of their content.

8. The system of claim 4 wherein the system includes at least one receiver and at least one server for each customer's movie theater location.

9. The system of claim 4 wherein said means for transmitting a customer-ordered movie in digital form to the customer's movie theater includes a satellite downlink at each customer's movie theater location.

10. The system of claim 9 wherein the movies are transmitted in encoded digital form and the satellite downlink includes a decoder protecting against piracy.

11. The system of claim 10 wherein the movies are transmitted in non-real time.

12

12. The system of claim 4 wherein said central information processing station includes a customer interface web server permitting Internet access to the system.

13. A method for distributing movies owned by content providers and for displaying the movies on a digital display device according to the dictates of digital display device operators who are the customers, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) permitting customers to review movies that are available in digital form to the customers;

(b) permitting a customer to schedule and purchase a movie for display on a particular electronic display device located at the customer's movie theater at a scheduled time; and

(c) transmitting a customer-ordered movie in digital form to the customer's digital display device for display at said scheduled time.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of providing said content provider with Internet access to enable review, scheduling and purchase of available movie content.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein prior to enabling access to said schedule of times and available electronic display locations, the step of providing security code and billing code information for identifying said customer and authorizing access to said system.

16. The method of claim 15, further including the steps of:

verifying that movie content for scheduled for display is displayed at the intended time at the intended display and generating verification information pertaining thereto; and,

receiving and storing in a storage device said verification information generated by each said verification means.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein after said verifying, the step of:

generating bills associated with purchased movies; and, transmitting said bills via phone lines to a content provider.

18. The method of claim 16, further including the step of: generating royalty payment information for use in paying content providers for use of their movie content.

19. The method of claim 14, further including providing dedicated high-speed connection to a security device for enabling high-usage customers to review, schedule and purchase available movie content.

20. The method of claim 14, wherein said transmitting step c) includes the step of: implementing a transmission mechanism selected from the group comprising: high speed cable, a satellite link, a high-speed communications line, the Internet, a high speed optical fiber.

21. The method of claim 14, wherein prior to transmitting step c), the step of digitizing and encoding said movie content, said digital display device including decoder for decoding said movie content and protecting against piracy.

22. The system of claim, 14 wherein the movies are transmitted in non-real time.

\* \* \* \* \*